

Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, July 15, 2016

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Today (July 15) – [Housing Aid](#) applications due

Today (July 15) – [Physical-restraint](#) data due

August 1 – Fast-Track [Repair Program](#) intent letter

August 19 – [School Bus Monitor Variance](#) requests due

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

Colleagues,

Since we sent out the Field Memo on Friday, it was brought to our attention that, given different student pathways in math (some students take algebra in grades 10 or 11), there would be a small percentage of students who would have no required state test in math if we relied on grade 9 as the last required testing year. In addition, there might be a perceived incentive to delay algebra to grade 10 or later to avoid state testing in math.

The intent of the change communicated in the Field Memo on Friday was to create room for the state-financed PSAT and SAT in grades 10 and 11 by scaling back PARCC from two required high-school tests per subject to one required high-school test per subject. This balance of PSAT/SAT testing and PARCC testing will provide both standards- and course-based information (via the PARCC test) and enhanced academic college-readiness information (via the SAT) for all students.

Based on these additional considerations, see below for an updated version of the policy statement (with changes highlighted in yellow). Although the grades 3-9 band will remain in place for ELA, the language below clarifies the requirement for one required PARCC math test in high school. For most students, this will be the PARCC Algebra I test (in grade 9, 10, or 11). For students who took algebra in middle school, this would be the PARCC Geometry or Algebra II test.

The result is a 50-percent reduction in PARCC testing (from two required PARCC high-school tests in each subject to one required PARCC high-school test in each subject) so as to provide extra space for the optional administration of PSAT and SAT in grades 10 and 11, respectively. Of course, districts may decide locally to administer the PSAT and SAT to all students.

As noted on Friday, over the course of the school year we will hold conversations with you and other stakeholders to determine if we should revise the high-school assessment program to include the PSAT and/or SAT assessments as part of the accountability process.

Thank you,

Ken

1. RIDE announces 2016-17 PARCC administration information; testing will be for students in grades 3 through 9 only (or upon completion of Algebra for math)

As we enter our third year of the PARCC assessment, we would like to confirm some important testing policies for the coming school year. Under the No Child Left Behind Act and the new federal legislation, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), public schools are accountable for all enrolled students. Therefore, our statewide testing policy provides that all students in tested grades or courses who are enrolled in a public school are expected to participate in state assessments.

In addition to PARCC testing this coming year, all Rhode Island public-school sophomores and juniors will have the opportunity, if they choose to do so, to take the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT, respectively, for free during the school day. (See [FAQ document](#) for details). Districts may decide locally to administer the PSAT or SAT to all students.

As we transition to new high-school graduation requirements and a new accountability system aligned with ESSA requirements, we must continue to guard against over-testing. Therefore, while we encourage students in grade 10 to participate in the free PSAT test and students in grade 11 to participate in the free SAT test (in grade 9, 10, or 11), we will administer PARCC assessments for students in *grades 3 through 9 only* (or upon completion of algebra for math). The required tested grades or courses are as follows:

- *Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8:* **PARCC** English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy and Mathematics assessments
- *Grade 9:* **PARCC** ELA/Literacy Grade 9 assessment (*Note: We will no longer administer the PARCC Grade 10 ELA/Literacy assessment.*)
- *Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II:* Students must take one PARCC math test in high school. For most students, this will be the PARCC Algebra I test. For students who took algebra in middle school, the required test while in high school would be the PARCC Geometry or Algebra II test

Over the course of the school year, we will hold conversations with you and other stakeholders to determine if we should revise

the high-school assessment program to include the PSAT and/or SAT assessments as part of the accountability process.

As [previously announced](#) (see 1-29-16 Field Memo, item #6; 12-24-15 Field Memo, item #2), all schools will be expected to administer the PARCC *computer-based* assessments in this coming school year. PARCC paper-based assessments will be allowed only for students with documented accommodations that require assessments to be administered via paper and pencil or if a waiver is granted to a school that has not yet been able to fully implement its plan to transition to a full computer-based administration.

Also, we will have a single PARCC testing window this coming year, and schools will have up to 30 school days to administer computer-based assessments.

We will send the full memo on PARCC assessment requirements, which provides additional details on the limited exceptions to these requirements, out to the field via the various RIDE listservs, and we will also post the full memo on the RIDEmap District Exchange. If you have questions about the PARCC assessments, please send them to PARCC@ride.ri.gov.

2. R.I. selected as participating state in social-emotional learning initiative

We have received word that the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has approved our proposal and selected Rhode Island as one of the participating states in the CASEL Collaborative States Initiative. As a participating state, we will participate in national meetings and webinars on social and emotional learning and we will have available to us a trove of

resources from CASEL on model standards and policies, evidence-based teaching practices, guidelines, and assessment measures regarding social and emotional learning. This partnership is particularly welcome at this time, as “social and emotional learning and wellness” is one of the key components of our 2015-2020 strategic plan. We are excited about this opportunity.

3. USED approves R.I. applications for School Improvement Grants

We have received word from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) that the USED has approved our applications for School Improvement Grants (SIGs) for Fiscal Years 2015 and 2016. The USED will award Rhode Island approximately \$1.6 million to support struggling schools in the state. The precise use of these funds will be one of the topics we will consider, with guidance from the Committee of Practitioners and with input from the field and the community, as we prepare for transition to the new federal law, the Every Student Succeeds Act.

From RIDE

Assessments:

4. RIDE announces 2016-17 PARCC testing windows

Rhode Island has three test-administration windows for PARCC testing: Regular Administration, Fall Block Administration, and Spring Block Administration. The vast majority of students in Rhode Island will participate in the Regular Administration of PARCC tests in the spring. Only a small number of students (in grade 9 at one of the seven high schools in the state that have

block scheduling) will participate in Fall Block or Spring Block PARCC testing.

Our *Regular Administration* (spring 2017) PARCC testing window will be as follows:

April 3 to May 26, 2017

Within this 40-school-day statewide testing window, LEAs will be expected to create a *30-school-day* testing window that applies to all schools within the LEA. Once you establish the testing window, each school will be free to create its own building-specific testing schedule within that window (i.e., with testing days and start times that do not have to match other schools in the district).

As a reminder, *all schools* participating in Regular Administration PARCC testing will be expected to administer tests online. Administration of the PARCC paper-based tests will be only for meeting individual student accommodation needs or if a waiver is granted to a school that has not yet been able to fully implement its plan to transition to a full computer-based administration.

Our *Fall Block Administration* PARCC testing window will be as follows:

November 21, 2016, to January 12, 2017

Our *Spring Block Administration* PARCC testing window will be as follows:

April 24 to June 5, 2017

Note: These 30-school-day *Block Administration* testing windows apply to only students in grade 9 at one of the seven high schools in Rhode Island that have block scheduling.

All schools participating in Block Administration PARCC testing will also be expected to administer tests online, as the administration of PARCC paper-based tests will be only for meeting individual student accommodation needs or if a waiver is granted to a school that has not yet been able to fully implement its plan to transition to a full computer-based administration.

As always, the testing windows for all statewide assessments are posted online, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Assessment/AssessmentSchedules.aspx>

Legislative:

5. RIDE provides table listing education legislation from General Assembly 2016

The table below lists legislation that this year's session of the General Assembly passed. Note that the bill numbers contained in each box will enable you to search the text of the bill from the General Assembly website:

(<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/pages/legislation.aspx>, see Bill Status/History, enter bill number under "Bills").

Many of the acts passed with various amendments, but a search using the bill numbers will give you access to all versions of the

legislation, including the version that the General Assembly approved.

Title/Explanation
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION (Appropriate public education made available to a disabled child until their twenty-first birthday or completion of program in which they are enrolled as of their twenty-first birthday.) S 2391, H 7050
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS (Requires all high and middle schools to have automated external defibrillators (AEDs) on site for daily use, for school sponsored activities and athletic events for use in emergencies. Someone trained in the use of the AED would be present at each event. This act shall take effect on August 1, 2017.) S 2494, H 7275
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION - ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT (Requires the board of education to adopt a state goal of closing the achievement gaps in third grade reading and math.)S 2554
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- CURRICULUM -- FREE PLAY RECESS (All children attending public schools or any other schools managed or controlled by the state, that has elementary grades kindergarten through six (6) shall receive in those schools at least twenty (20) minutes of supervised and safe free play recess each day.)S 2669, H 7644
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- PUBLIC PREPARATORY ACADEMIES (Authorizes the cities of Providence and Central Falls to create an alternative academy for students having difficulty in traditional public school settings.) S 2867, H 7051
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION - ESTABLISHMENT OF CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS (Requires local written support granted by the city/town council of a sending district, for a proposed network charter school, and would require the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education to place substantial weight on the impact of the sending districts when considering a proposed charter or expansion of a charter school.) S 3075, H 7051
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION (Adds dyslexia-targeted assistance as a required aspect of the literacy program for students at the elementary grade level.) H 7052
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION - HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS (Modifies types of healthy foods/beverages sold to students per federal law with exceptions for career/technical schools with culinary arts/food service programs based on new definitions.) H 7657
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION - HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS (Allows school districts to maintain an annual registry for students requiring bus transportation to school. The purpose of this registration would be to assist each district's bus transportation plan to be more cost-efficient.) H 8005
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES - OPERATORS' AND CHAUFFEURS' LICENSES - SCHOOL BUS DRIVER ANNUAL TRAINING (Requires that school bus drivers' annual training include the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's school bus driver in-service training series.) H8082
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT (This act authorizes RIDE to conduct a comprehensive study on a unified approach to statewide education.) H 8308
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION - TEACHING AFTER RETIREMENT (Allows retired members of

the state retirement system who are certified as substitute teachers to substitute teach not more than ninety (90) days a year without reduction in retirement benefits.) S 2282, H 7983
ENTITLED, AN ACT IN AMENDMENT OF AND IN ADDITION TO CHAPTER 286 OF THE PUBLIC LAWS OF 1986, ENTITLED "AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE TOWNS OF CHARLESTOWN, RICHMOND AND HOPKINTON, TO JOIN A REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, INCORPORATING SAID REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS, CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A REGIONAL SCHOOL FOR THE JOINT USE OF THE PARTICIPATING TOWNS, WITHIN SAID REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ESTABLISHED BY THIS ACT, " AS AMENDED (Bases the composition of the Chariho Regional School on more recent population schedules.) S 2816, H 7720
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION - CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES (this act would increase the amount of state aid for children placed in foster care group homes or other residential facility by a Rhode Island agency, including Bradley Hospital) S 2145
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES - AUTOMATED SCHOOL ZONE SPEED ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM (Authorizes department of transportation and municipalities to operate automated school zone speed enforcement systems.) S 2254, H 7446
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD RHODE ISLAND (Requires the governor's workforce board to expand job and career opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.) S 2476, H 8035

Title/Explanation
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION - HOLOCAUST GENOCIDE EDUCATION (Requires the inclusion of instruction on holocaust and genocide studies. All students should have received instruction on genocide and holocaust awareness materials by the time they have graduated from high school. S 2396, H 7488
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- FREEDOM FROM PRONE RESTRAINT ACT (Prohibits the use of prone restraint in certain covered facilities licensed or certified by the state, and would create a study commission to study the restraint reporting requirements of covered facilities.) S 2426. H 7154
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- BILITERACY SEAL (Establishes a state seal of biliteracy to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English.) S 2735, H 8178
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION - COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE (Broadens the law on compulsory school attendance so that it would apply to all children enrolled in kindergarten.) S 2022, H 7845
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND SUPERINTENDENTS (Directs school superintendents to review discipline data to determine unequal impact on students based on race/ethnicity/disability status and respond to any disparity and sets out of school supervision standards.) S 2168, H 7056
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION - HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS (Provides that a school department permit each school within their jurisdiction to maintain epinephrine in cartridge injections to administer on an emergency basis to students.) S 2170, H 8328 {LC3212/A/1}
ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS (Requires that all school districts develop and maintain a written policy relating to the use of internet filtering measures for computer access in

Innovation:

6. CS4RI professional development grants available to teachers, schools, districts

CS4RI (Computer Science for Rhode Island) professional-development grants are designed to offset the cost of Computer Science PD (professional development) tuition and teacher PD stipends for approved CS4RI programs. A list of approved CS4RI programs is available at www.cs4ri.org. Public schools, districts, and individual teachers are eligible to apply. Grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, and the grants cannot exceed program costs. Grantees must commit to offering computer-science opportunities beginning on or before 2017-18 school year. Grantees are also expected to participate in an evaluation process for computer-science programs and to administer an optional survey to students participating in computer-science coursework. For more information, please visit www.cs4ri.org or e-mail Octavia Abell, at octavia.abell@innovate.ri.gov.

7. Budget includes renewed funding for Governor Raimondo's Dual Enrollment Fund

Governor Raimondo's Prepare RI Dual Enrollment Fund was approved for a second year as part of the Fiscal Year 2017 state budget. Through the Prepare RI Dual Enrollment Fund, qualified Rhode Island public high-school students can take dual and concurrent coursework with CCRI, RIC, and URI at no cost to them

or their families. Additional information about the Prepare RI Dual Enrollment Fund can be found at:

www.ride.ri.gov/dualenrollment.

Questions about Prepare RI can be directed to Nicole Smith, at Nicole.Smith@ride.ri.gov or 222-8436.

Health:

8. Guidance available on response to Zika virus

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have released “Zika Virus Response Planning: Interim Guidance for District and School Administrators in the Continental United States and Hawaii.” The guidance is available online, at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/schools.html>.

Legal:

9. *Correction:* Commissioner’s decision issued on communications with student’s parent

Last week’s Field Memo had an incorrect link for this decision:

Decision of the school district to restrict parent's communication with her child’s teachers was not shown to be unreasonable, arbitrary, capricious, or in violation of state or federal education law; however, an indefinite ban would prevent teachers who will be working with this child in the upcoming school year from establishing meaningful,

two-way communication and would inhibit the creation of a positive relationship between parent and teacher as partners in the education process. Therefore, direct parent-teacher communications are permitted during school year 2016-17 unless and until such communications are determined by district personnel to be unduly burdensome:

<http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2016/017-16 J.M. v. N. Kingstown S C 06302016.pdf>

From the U.S. Department of Education (USED)

10. Secretary King announces Promise Neighborhoods grant competition

U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King, Jr., announced on Wednesday the 2016 Promise Neighborhoods grant competition, which will award \$30 million to up to five organizations to provide their communities with a coordinated, comprehensive suite of services and school supports aimed at improving the outcomes for students and their families. For more information, see:

http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-king-announces-2016-promise-neighborhoods-grant-competition?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

11. USED releases toolkit to help schools support immigrants, refugees, and their families

The U.S. Department of Education Newcomer Toolkit is designed to help schools support immigrants, refugees, and their families with a successful integration process. This toolkit provides information, resources, and examples of effective practices that educators can use to support newcomers in our schools and communities. We are pleased to share this tool with you. You can access the full document here:

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/new-comer-toolkit/ncomertoolkit.pdf

From other organizations

12. Students invited to attend college-information session

The Indian Institutes of Technology Alumni Association (IIT AGNE) is hosting a College Information Session focused on high school students applying for, and getting into, tier 1 colleges.

This information session will be held at the IIT Leadership Conference on August 12 -14 at the Rhode Island Convention Center. https://www.iit-2016.org/?page_id=4318

The event will feature a two-hour interactive session designed to help high-school students prepare for college admission applications by maximizing on their personal talents and assets. Our panel of speakers will focus on high-achieving students to cross obstacles faced by the most competitive group of applicants.

To attend the College Admission Information Session for free, register to volunteer.

As a volunteer you will get an opportunity to contribute to event logistics, be part of the organization of interesting panels and keynotes, and most importantly, get a chance to network with luminaries in various fields. In addition, we will also try and figure out how you can attend some of the panels and events that you are interested in.

We are trying to match your interests with volunteering opportunities, to the extent possible. Detailed program information is available online.

<https://www.iit-2016.org/#home>

Please provide the information below, to get the registration process started.

Click the box to: **FILL IN FORM**

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/FieldMemos.aspx>